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ABSTRACT

A study of the relationship of parent involvement to teacher education was conducted in response to increasing emphasis upon parent participation in elementary schools. To determine whether training for prospective teachers should be broadened to reflect this increase in parent participation, teacher educators, teachers, and principals were asked to give their opinions about parent involvement. A sample of 980 teacher educators, 1,500 elementary school principals, and 1,983 elementary school teachers participated in the study. Participants responded to a Parent Involvement Questionnaire, designed to ascertain attitudes toward working with parents, parent involvement in education, current practices relevant to parent involvement, opinions about whether teachers should receive training to work with parents, and experiences which might be helpful in this type of training. A general consensus appeared among the participants regarding the desirability of having parents become more involved in education. Parents were seen as cooperative, concerned, and competent partners in the educational process. However, teachers and principals expressed a clear preference for specific types of desirable parent involvement. They strongly supported parents being more involved with helping children with school work and becoming more active in support roles for school activities. They did not favor parents becoming involved in curriculum and instruction or in administrative decision making. The consensus across all three groups seemed to be that teachers should be trained to work with parents. There was, however, strong support for making such training elective and also for providing such training as inservice education for teachers. (JD)

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A SURVEY OF EDUCATORS REGARDING PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATION: IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHER TRAINING

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A SURVEY OF EDUCATORS REGARDING PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

Project Goals: To develop specific guidelines for training teachers to work with parents in the schools; to base these guidelines on the experience and attitudes of teacher educators, principals, and teachers; and to identify areas of consensus between these groups regarding parent involvement.

INTRODUCTION

In response to the increasing emphasis upon parent involvement in the schools, the CENTER Project began a three-year study to look at the relationship of parent involvement to teacher education. The assumption on which this study was based was that an increase in parent involvement would also signal a change in the way teachers see their professional role; that their new role would involve increased interaction with parents in addition to their existing duties related to classroom instruction. In order to determine whether training for prospective teachers should be broadened to reflect this larger professional role, this project has asked teacher educators, principals, and elementary school teachers about the importance of working with parents.

During the first year of study, teacher educators in colleges of education were asked to express their opinions about parent involvement and also to describe the extent to which prospective teachers in their classes were being trained to understand and work with parents. The results of this study indicated that teacher educators generally favored the idea of training prospective teachers to work with parents, but there was little consensus about the particular ways in which parents should participate in the schools or about the most appropriate ways to prepare teachers for working with parents.

Activities for the second year of the study were shaped by the responses of teacher educators. The purpose of the second year's efforts was to identify the aspects of parent involvement which were most favored in the education profession and then develop guidelines for training prospective teachers which addressed those specific aspects.

In order to assure that these guidelines were based upon the actual experience of professional educators in the schools, surveys of both teachers and principals were designed. Questionnaires were used to ask both groups for their opinions about parent involvement, for a description of current practices in the area, and for recommendations about training prospective teachers to work with parents. The teachers' survey and the principals' survey contained many of the questions answered by teacher educators, so a comparison of the three groups would be possible. In addition, specific questions were included which pertained specifically to each group of professionals.

For purposes of comparison, teacher educators, teachers, and principals were all asked to give their opinions about parent involvement, their opinions about the usefulness of parent input into school decisions, and their ratings of the value of techniques used to train prospective teachers to work with parents.

The survey of teachers and the survey of principals are even more comparable because both groups were asked to indicate their attitude toward various aspects of parent involvement, to rate the usefulness of having parents involved in school decisions, to indicate which training experiences could most help prospective teacher learn to work with

parents, to rate the relative importance of seven major parent involvement roles, and to describe current parent involvement activities in their schools. Both the teachers and the principals were also asked to provide demographic information which was used to identify subgroups within the sample of respondents.

Rationale

Teachers are increasingly being asked to broaden their responsibilities in educating children at the elementary school level. They are called upon now to work with parents in addition to improving their instructional skills. Some teachers welcome the idea of working with parents to impact the educational experiences of children. Others are opposed to the new responsibilities and feel that teachers already have enough to do. Still others offer some resistance, but accept these duties as part of their professional role as teachers.

Regardless of the reaction, these additional responsibilities for teachers call for additional preparation or training. In order to prepare teachers for these new responsibilities, teacher training should be broadened. This training may be provided at either the preservice (undergraduate) or inservice levels.

In an effort to identify training needs related to parent involvement, this study asked three groups of educators to define what they mean by parent involvement, asked them what they thought of it, asked them about current parent involvement practices in their schools, and asked them to identify best methods for training prospective teachers to work with parents. The survey instrument was designed to provide information about teacher training needs in parent involvement and to classify those

needs according to whether they relate to developing new attitudes, acquiring new knowledge, or learning new skills.

This survey was also designed to identify barriers to effective parent involvement in the schools. In order to begin identifying these barriers, it was first necessary to establish a common understanding of what was meant by "parent involvement." Questionnaire items were developed to describe a wide range of parent involvement activities. Respondents were then asked to indicate which activities they saw as valuable for the schools.

Goal and Objectives

This research project has the following goal and objectives for the research activities:

Goal: To develop specific guidelines for training teachers to work with parents in the schools; to base these guidelines on the experience and attitudes of each stakeholder group involved; and to identify specific areas of consensus and conflict between these groups.

Objectives:

(1) To assess the attitude of teachers toward the general idea of having parents involved in the educational process.

(2) To identify specific school decisions for which parent input is seen as valuable.

(3) To identify specific parent involvement roles which teachers see as valuable.

(4) To determine current practices with regard to parent involvement in elementary schools.

(5) To specify training experiences which might be valuable in teaching prospective teachers to work with parents.

Research Questions

In this project the following research questions were posed:

(1) To what extent do educators support the concept of parent involvement?

(2) Are parents perceived as motivated to be involved in their children's education?

(3) Are parents perceived as having the necessary skills for the various parent involvement roles they might play in the schools?

(4) What types of parent involvement do they see as useful?

(5) Should the goals of parent involvement be to involve parents in the schools or involve parents in home learning?

(6) For which school administrative and curriculum decisions would parent involvement be most useful?

(7) Should principals, teachers, or parents take the initiative for implementing parent involvement?

(8) What are the current practices in the schools with regard to parent involvement?

(9) Should there be special training for teachers to work with parents?

(10) What methods would be most helpful in helping prospective teachers learn about working with parents?

(11) Are there differences of opinion about parent involvement which are related to differences in the demographic characteristics of educators in this study?

METHODOLOGY

Sample

The sample of 980 teacher educators participating in this study were identified by contacting each of the colleges of education in Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas. These states make up the SEDL six-state region. These colleges of education provided lists of the names of professors who were involved

in teaching classes to undergraduate elementary education students. Each of these professors were then asked to complete and return the initial questionnaire of the project. The samples of 1,500 elementary school principals and 1,983 teachers were contacted with the help of Market Data Retrieval, Inc. (MDR) which provided a random sample of both groups from each of the six states.

Description of Instrument

The Parent Involvement Questionnaire (PIQ) was developed and used as the data gathering instrument for this survey effort. The PIQ was initially developed to survey elementary educators. Both the content and format of this survey instrument were based upon suggestions provided by researchers in the area of parent involvement, NIE Project Staff, and statistical consultants. In order to revise the PIQ for surveying principals and teachers, it was pretested with teachers and principals in Washington, D.C. and in Grand Island, Nebraska.

The items on the PIQ were developed to ask each group of educators for their general attitudes toward working with parents, their attitudes toward parent involvement in education, their current practices relevant to parent involvement, their opinions about whether teachers should receive training to work with parents, and their opinions about the specific training experiences which might be most helpful in this type of training.

Procedures for Data Collection

The initial survey was sent to 980 professors teaching undergraduate elementary education courses at 133 colleges and universities in this region (Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas). Using information from the first survey and from consultants, a more precise

questionnaire was developed for use in subsequent surveys. This revised questionnaire was then mailed to a random sample of approximately 1,500 elementary school principals in the six-state region. Finally, the revised questionnaire was also used to survey a random sample of approximately 2,000 teachers in the region.

Data Analysis Procedures

The data were first analyzed to (1) generate an overall picture of responses to the survey, (2) obtain a composite description of respondent characteristics, and (3) plan for subsequent or secondary analyses. The first analysis involved generating descriptive statistics for all items on the survey questionnaire. The distribution of responses and a description of central tendency were described by the range of responses, the frequency of different responses, the mean response and the standard deviation. Missing data were not included in the calculations of central tendency.

Results of the first analysis were used to get an overall picture of responses to the survey, to get a composite description of the respondents' characteristics, and to plan subsequent analyses. Tables were prepared to show the mean ratings for items in each section of the survey questionnaire. A summary of the characteristics of the respondents returning this survey was also prepared.

The mean ratings were used to rank the items in each section of the survey to identify those items receiving the strongest positive or negative ratings. Tables were prepared to show those items receiving the strongest response in each section of the survey in rank order.

The standard deviation was used to identify the items with the most

disagreement among respondents. Then the responses to these items were broken out by each of seven demographic variables to determine whether the variation in response might be systematically related to some factor such as ethnic background or years of experience.

Joint frequencies were computed for all the demographic variables to obtain a clearer idea of the interrelationship between these variables. This operation provided information such as the number of male respondents in cities of over 500,000, or the number of Hispanic, female respondents with more than five years of teaching experience. This information was used to interpret the results of the survey and to describe the population for which they may be generalizable.

RESULTS

Although the questionnaires used with each group were not identical, general comparisons were made between response trends from the three groups and specific comparisons were often possible between two of the three. Results of this survey are presented in the following sequence. First, item responses are examined by looking at clusters of items which assess educators' attitudes toward parent involvement. Next, areas of consensus and of conflict are discussed in terms of their implications for parent involvement and teacher training.

Attitudes Toward Parent Involvement in Education

On all three surveys teacher educators, principals, and teachers expressed positive feelings about parents. They agreed with statements that parents were usually cooperative, that parents were capable of making rational decisions about their children when they had adequate information, and that parents usually know what is best for their children (see Table 1).

TABLE 1
TEACHER EDUCATORS,
TEACHERS AND PRINCIPALS
AGREED WITH THESE STATEMENTS
ABOUT PARENTS

Parents are usually cooperative with teachers.
Parents usually know what is best for their elementary school age children.
When given adequate information about their children, parents can make rational decisions.
Parent participation in all school related matters should be increased.
Stronger efforts should be made to include parents on curriculum development boards.
More parents would help children at home if they knew what to do.
Having parents help their children with homework is a good idea.

They agreed that parents should help children with their homework and that more parents would help children at home if they knew what to do. They also agreed that parent participation in all school matters should be increased and that stronger efforts should be made to include parents on curriculum development committees. In summary, these responses indicate a favorable attitude toward parents and toward the general idea of involving them in education, whether it pertains to their own child or to their child's school.

This apparent consensus about parent involvement was clarified by looking at responses to items which specified definitions of parent involvement. Teacher educators were presented with a list of decisions which are commonly made by teachers and administrators in the schools. They were asked to indicate which decisions parents should have input into and which decisions they should have responsibility for making. They indicated that parents should have input into 17 of the 19 decisions, but should have final responsibility for making only 1 (see Table 2). Teachers and

TABLE 2
INPUT AND FINAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR DECISIONS

Decision-Making Issues	Input and Responsibility for Decision		
	Parents	Teachers	Principal
1. Ability grouping for instruction.	P	(T)	PR
2. Homework assignments.	P	(T)	PR
3. Classroom discipline methods.	P	(T)	PR
4. Pupil evaluation.	P	(T)	PR
5. Teaching methods.	P	(T)	PR
6. Selection of textbooks and other learning materials.	P	(T)	PR
7. Degree of emphasis on social skills vs. cognitive skills.	P	(T)	PR
* 8. Placement into Special Education.	P	T	PR
* 9. Emphasis in arts vs. basic skills.	P	T	PR
*10. Emphasis on science vs. social studies.	P	T	PR
11. Hiring/firing school staff.	P	T	(PR)
12. Providing career information.	P	(T)	PR
*13. Sex role/sex education instruction.	P	T	PR
*14. Emphasis on multicultural education.	P	T	PR
15. Promotion and retention standards of students.	P	T	(PR)
16. Desegregation/integration plans.	P	T	(PR)
17. Rotation/assignment of teachers within building.	P	T	(PR)
18. Family problems affecting student performance.	(P)	T	PR
19. Evaluation of school staff.	P	T	(PR)

*Indicates that no group was seen as having final responsibility by 50% of respondents.
( ) Indicates 50% or more of respondents felt this group should have final responsibility.
___ Indicates 50% or more of respondents felt this group should have input to decision.

principals were given a similar list of decisions and were asked to indicate the extent to which parent input would be helpful.

Teacher ratings of the usefulness of parent input were very similar to those of principals (see Table 3). Parent input was seen as most useful in areas related to family problems, placing their child in special education, sex education, amount of homework assigned and developing integration plans (see Table 4). Parent input was seen as least useful in administrative decisions such as making assignments of teachers to classrooms, evaluating teacher performance, hiring or firing school staff, or deciding budget priorities for the school. They also saw parent input as not useful in selecting teaching methods at the school (see Table 5).

Another comparison of the responses of principals and teachers revealed that teachers tended to see parent input as more useful in decisions which were usually made by principals, and that principals also gave parent input higher ratings for decisions usually made by teachers (see Tables 6 and 7).

Responses to Specific Parent Involvement Roles

In an effort to identify specific aspects of parent involvement which were seen as most useful by educators, teachers, and principals were presented with seven parent involvement roles and were asked to indicate how important it was for schools to have parents in each role. Again, the responses of teachers and principals were very similar. As shown in Table 8, both groups favored parents being involved as an audience for school activities, as supporters of school programs and as home tutors with their children. They also gave their lowest ratings to having parents involved as decision makers, as advocates, or as paid school staff.

TABLE 3
COMPARISON OF TEACHERS' AND PRINCIPALS'
RATINGS OF USEFULNESS INVOLVING
PARENTS IN SCHOOL DECISIONS*

Decisions	Teacher Ratings	Principal Ratings
1. Grouping children for instruction.....	2.325	2.399
2. Amount of homework assigned.....	2.648	2.809
3. Choosing classroom discipline methods.....	2.810	2.767
4. Evaluating pupil performance.....	2.337	2.412
5. Selecting teaching methods.....	1.980	2.040
6. Selecting textbooks and other learning materials...	2.349	2.449
7. Emphasizing affective skills rather than cognitive skills.....	2.430	2.599
8. Placing children in Special Education.....	3.199	3.377
9. Curriculum emphasis on the arts rather than basic skills.....	2.038	2.351
10. Hiring/firing of school staff.....	1.508	1.472
11. Evaluating teacher performance.....	1.947	1.780
12. Deciding priorities for the school budget.....	2.262	2.288
13. Emphasizing multicultural/bilingual education.....	2.368	2.318
14. Setting promotion and retention standards of students.....	2.183	2.326
15. Formulating desegregation/integration plans.....	2.744	2.856
16. Making assignments of teachers within a school.....	1.486	1.426
17. Deciding if family problems are affecting school performance.....	3.884	3.764
18. Setting school discipline guidelines.....	2.760	2.830
19. Providing sex role instruction and sex education...	2.986	2.992
20. Setting guidelines for grading students.....	2.075	2.300

*Using a five-point rating scale from 1 (Not Useful) to 5 (very useful).

TABLE 4
PARENT INPUT WAS SEEN
AS MOST USEFUL IN THESE DECISIONS

Rank		Teachers' Ratings	Principals' Ratings
1.	Deciding if family problems are affecting school performance.....	3.884	3.764
2.	Placing children in Special Education.....	3.199	3.377
3.	Providing sex role instruction and sex education.....	2.986	2.992
4.	Amount of homework assigned.....	2.648	2.809
5.	Formulating desegregation/integration plans.....	2.744	2.856

TABLE 5
PARENT INPUT WAS SEEN
AS LEAST USEFUL IN THESE DECISIONS

Rank		Teachers' Ratings	Principals' Ratings
1.	Making assignments of teachers within a school.....	1.486	1.426
2.	Hiring/firing of school staff.....	1.508	1.472
3.	Evaluating teacher performance.....	1.947	1.780
4.	Selecting teaching methods.....	1.980	2.040
5.	Deciding priorities for the school budget.....	2.262	2.288

TABLE 6
USEFULNESS OF PARENT INPUT INTO DECISIONS
USUALLY MADE BY TEACHERS: COMPARISON
OF TEACHER AND PRINCIPAL VIEWS

Decisions	Teacher Ratings	Principal Ratings
Grouping children for instruction.....	2.325	2.399
Amount of homework assigned.....	2.648	2.809
Choosing classroom discipline methods.....	2.810	2.767
Evaluating pupil performance.....	2.337	2.412
Selecting teaching methods.....	1.980	2.040
Selecting textbooks and other learning materials..	2.349	2.449
Emphasizing affective skills rather than cognitive skills.....	2.430	2.599

TABLE 7
USEFULNESS OF PARENT INPUT INTO DECISIONS
USUALLY MADE BY PRINCIPALS: COMPARISON
OF TEACHER AND PRINCIPAL VIEWS

Decisions	Teacher Ratings	Principal Ratings
Hiring/firing of school staff.....	1.508	1.472
Evaluating teacher performance.....	1.947	1.780
Setting promotion and retention standards of students.....	2.183	2.326
Formulating desegregation/integration plans.....	2.744	2.856
Making assignments of teachers within a school....	1.486	1.426

TABLE 8
TEACHERS' AND PRINCIPALS' RATINGS
OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT ROLES

Rank	Roles	Teachers' Rating (N=873)	Principals' Rating (N=726)
1.	Audience for school activities (e.g., attending special performances, etc.).....	4.242	4.116
2.	School program supporter (e.g., volunteers for activities, field trip chaperones, etc.).....	4.212	4.094
3.	Home tutor for children (i.e., helping children at home to master school work).....	3.858	3.648
4.	Co-learner (i.e., parents participate in activities where they learn about education with teachers, students and principals).....	3.651	3.589
5.	Paid school staff (e.g., aides, parent educators, assistant teachers, etc.).....	3.202	3.092
6.	Advocate (i.e., activist role regarding school policies and community issues).....	3.104	3.120
7.	Decision-maker (i.e., partners in school planning, curriculum or administrative decisions).....	2.407	2.609

These responses tend to confirm the previous results which suggest that principals and teachers favor the idea of parent involvement in education if it means helping children with homework or supporting school activities. However, there seems to be significantly less support for parent involvement in education if it means having parents involved in decisions which have traditionally belonged to professional educators.

Current Practices in Parent Involvement

Teacher educators were asked to indicate the extent to which they included training about working with parents in their courses. Their responses indicated that 4.2% of those surveyed taught a course on the subject, another 14.6% taught a module on the subject in one of their courses, 36.7% reported teaching a class on related issues, while 30.3% indicated they only dealt with parent issues when they came up.

In the revised questionnaire, teachers and principals were each

asked to look at 28 specific parent involvement activities and to indicate the extent to which each activity was typical of parent involvement in their own school. A five-point Likert scale was used in which 1 = Not Typical and 5 = Very Typical. Mean responses to these items are shown in Table 9.

Although the responses of teachers and of principals were again quite similar, they disagreed somewhat about which parent involvement activities were most typical in the schools. Those activities described as most typical by responding teachers included attending open house, chaperoning for school social functions, holding fund raisers to support school needs, attending parent-teacher conferences about children's progress and assisting children with school assignments at home. Principals' ratings agreed with those of teachers, but they tended to give each activity higher ratings suggesting they saw these activities as more typical than did the teachers (see Table 10).

Those parent involvement activities described as least typical by teachers included participating in hiring/firing decisions about school staff, participating in evaluation of school staff, participating in evaluation of students, setting goals for classroom learning and participating in curriculum development. Principals indicated general agreement with teachers, with the exception that they included parent participation in school budget planning as one of the least typical ways in which parents were involved in their schools (see Table 11).

Parent Involvement Training

All three groups surveyed were asked about the value of training teachers to work with parents and were asked whether this training should

TABLE 9
DESCRIPTION OF CURRENT PARENT INVOLVEMENT PRACTICES ACCORDING TO TEACHERS AND PRINCIPALS

	Activities	Teacher Ratings	Principal Ratings
1.	Setting goals with teachers for classroom learning..	1.483	1.845
2.	Assisting children with school assignments at home..	3.238	3.596
3.	Visiting the school to observe in classroom.....	2.286	2.747
4.	Attending open house or "follow-your-children's schedule" activities.....	3.726	4.217
5.	Participating in activities to prepare parents for home tutoring of their children.....	1.887	2.307
6.	Preparing and disseminating parent newsletter.....	2.122	2.453
7.	Holding fund-raisers to support school needs.....	3.621	3.810
8.	Conducting school public relations activities in the community.....	2.619	2.855
9.	Identifying community resources for the school.....	2.568	2.780
10.	Holding social functions at the school (coffees, luncheons, potluck suppers, etc.).....	2.602	2.855
11.	Tutoring students at home.....	2.290	2.642
12.	Assisting teachers with classroom learning activities.....	2.102	2.629
13.	Assisting in school resource areas, playgrounds, and health facilities.....	2.083	2.437
14.	Chaperoning for school field trips, picnics, parties, etc.....	3.714	3.853
15.	Helping with the improvement of school facilities and the classroom learning environment.....	2.494	2.803
16.	Providing clerical assistance to teachers.....	1.828	2.277
17.	Participating in parent-teacher inservice activities at school.....	1.915	2.331
18.	Attending parent-teacher educational meetings or conferences away from school.....	1.807	2.136
19.	Participation in school budget planning.....	1.553	1.570
20.	Participating in curriculum development.....	1.493	1.782
21.	Assisting in establishment of school's educational goals.....	1.594	2.114
22.	Participation in evaluation of school programs and instruction.....	1.616	2.008
23.	Participation in evaluation of school staff.....	1.323	1.439
24.	Participation in evaluation of students.....	1.400	1.557
25.	Participation in decisions about hiring/firing of school staff.....	1.213	1.264
26.	Identifying needs and problem areas of the school...	2.127	2.586
27.	Initiating policy changes for the school or school district.....	1.683	2.086
28.	Attending parent-teacher conferences about children's progress.....	3.606	3.976

*Using a five-point scale from 1 (Not Typical) to 5 (Very Typical).

TABLE 10
TEACHERS' AND PRINCIPALS' RATINGS
OF MOST TYPICAL PARENT INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES

Item	Activities	Teachers' Ratings (N=873)	Principals' Ratings (N=726)
(4)	Attending open house or "follow-your-children's schedule" activities.....	3.726	4.217
(28)	Attending parent/teacher conferences about children's progress.....	3.606	3.976
(14)	Chaperoning for school field trips, picnics, parties, etc.....	3.621	3.853
(7)	Holding fund-raisers to support school needs at home.....	3.714	3.810
(2)	Assisting children with school assignments at home.....	3.238	3.596

TABLE 11
COMPARISON OF TEACHERS' AND PRINCIPALS' RATINGS
OF LEAST TYPICAL PARENT INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES

Item	Activities	Teachers' Ratings (N=873)	Principals' Ratings (N=726)
(25)	Participation in decisions about hiring/firing of school staff.....	1.213	1.264
(23)	Participation in evaluation of school staff.....	1.323	1.439
(24)	Participation in evaluation of students.....	1.400	1.557
(19)	Participation in school budget planning.....		1.570
(20)	Participation in curriculum development.....	1.493	1.782
(1)	Setting goals for classroom learning.....	1.483	

be required or elective. The consensus across all three groups seemed to be that teachers should be trained to work with parents and that this training should be required. There was, however, strong support for making such training elective and also for providing such training as an inservice for teachers.

Teacher educators were asked to look at 14 specific training experiences which are used to train prospective teachers about parents and to indicate which they used in their teaching. Then they were asked to indicate which of these training experiences they felt were most effective. Elementary school teachers were presented with a similar list of training experiences and asked to indicate whether or not each experience was part of their own undergraduate training. Then they were asked to indicate which three of these training experiences they saw as most important in training prospective teachers about working with parents.

The training experiences most used by teacher educators were compared with the experiences most often reported by teachers as part of their undergraduate training in Table 12. A comparison of training experiences recommended by teachers and those recommended by principals is shown in Table 13. The training experiences which teachers recommended most strongly for training prospective teachers to work with parents included participating in parent-teacher conferences, followed by talking with inservice teachers about ways to work with parents, and third, participating in principal-teacher-parent conferences concerning students. Principals generally agreed with these recommendations, but they also recommended the experience of working with parent volunteers in the school.

When comparing the responses of teacher educators, teachers, and

TABLE 12
COMPARISON OF TEACHER EDUCATORS' AND TEACHERS' REPORTS OF TRAINING EXPERIENCES FOR WORKING WITH PARENTS

TEACHER EDUCATORS USED THESE TRAINING EXPERIENCES MOST IN TRAINING TEACHERS TO WORK WITH PARENTS (N=575)	TEACHERS MOST OFTEN REPORTED THESE TRAINING EXPERIENCES AS PART OF THEIR TRAINING TO WORK WITH PARENTS (N=873)
Participation in role-plays, or other laboratory exercises involving teachers and parents.	Participating in role playing or other such activities related to parent involvement
Mandatory participation in parent-teacher conferences.	Participating in parent-teacher conferences
	Participating in principal-teacher-parent conferences concerning students
Bringing in a public school teacher as a speaker on parent-teacher relations.	Talking with inservice teachers about ways to work with parents
Pairing student teachers with parent volunteers	Being involved in school activities with parent
Bringing in a parent(s) to class as experts in parent-teacher relations	Being involved in parent organizations
Required written family history of a child	

TABLE 13
A COMPARISON OF TEACHERS' AND PRINCIPALS' RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TRAINING PROSPECTIVE TEACHERS TO WORK WITH PARENTS

TEACHERS MOST STRONGLY RECOMMENDED THESE TRAINING EXPERIENCES (N=873)	PRINCIPALS MOST STRONGLY RECOMMENDED THESE TRAINING EXPERIENCES (N=726)
Participating in parent-teacher conferences	Talking with inservice teachers about ways to work with parents
Talking with inservice teachers about ways to work with parents	Participating in parent-teacher conferences
Participating in principal-teacher-parent conferences concerning students	Working with parent volunteers

principals, several patterns are worth noting. As shown in Table 14, the percent of professors who report using each of these experiences is relatively small when compared to the percent of teachers who report these experiences were part of their training and especially when compared with the principals' recommendations for teacher training. The responses of all three groups suggest that having student teachers participate in parent conferences is both widely used and seen as an effective way of teaching prospective teachers about parents. The practice of writing a family history of a child seems to be fairly common among teacher educators, but is not recommended as an effective training experience by teachers or by principals.

TABLE 14
COMPARISON OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT TRAINING EXPERIENCES MOST USED BY TEACHER EDUCATORS WITH EXPERIENCES REPORTED BY TEACHERS AND EXPERIENCES RECOMMENDED BY PRINCIPALS

Rank	Item	Percent Educators Who Used This Experience	Percent Teachers Who Reported This Experience Was Part of Their Training	Percent Principals Who Recommended This Training Experience for Teachers
1	Participation in role-plays, or other laboratory exercises involving teachers and parents	38%	32.6%	84.4%
2	Mandatory participation in parent-teacher conferences	31%	45.3%	94.8%
3	Pairing student teachers with parent volunteers	29%	28.4%	93.7%
4	Required written family history of a child	23%	30.5%	51.2%
5	Bringing in a parent(s) to class as experts in parent-teacher relations	19%	23.7%	80.9%

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

There appears to be a general consensus among teachers, principals, and teacher educators regarding the desirability of having parents become

more involved in education. Their responses to questions in each of the three surveys indicate that they see parents as cooperative, concerned, and competent partners in the educational process. However, the teachers and principals in this region expressed a clear preference for the specific types of parent involvement they see as desirable.

They strongly supported parents being more involved with helping their own children with school work. This type of parent involvement complements the work of the school and most directly impacts the academic success of the child.

They also favored parents becoming more involved in support roles for school activities. This type of parent involvement helps to reduce the extracurricular demands on teachers and emphasizes the fact that the school is a community effort.

They did not favor parents becoming more involved in the curriculum and instruction decisions of the school. Teachers and principals indicated that they were not sure of parents' competence to make these decisions, they did not see this type of parent involvement as useful, and that it was fairly atypical of their schools.

They also did not favor parents becoming more involved in the administrative or governance of the schools. This type of parent involvement received the lowest ratings from both groups. Even though a majority of educators agreed that parent involvement in all school matters should be increased, they also agreed that parents should not be involved in making the decisions which are usually made by principals in the schools.

Teachers, principals, and teacher educators also agreed on the

importance of training prospective teachers to work with parents as well as teaching children. The results of these surveys suggest that such parent involvement training should concentrate upon (1) training teachers to elicit parent cooperation and support for school activities, and (2) training teachers to teach parents about teaching their own children.

During the current year, this project is conducting a survey about parent involvement directed at parents in the six-state region. Results from this survey will provide important information about parent involvement from the perspective of parents. Implications for teacher training will then be derived from the comparison of parents' views with those of professional educators.